



PHASE

1

Services to be Provided
by King County

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Services to be Provided by King County

Ordinance 14514 directs the Commission on Governance to address first: Whether or not the services and service areas historically funded by the current expense fund should be provided to the public by King County and, of those current expense fund services determined by the commission as not being appropriate for King County to provide, whether or not those services should be provided by another entity, be it public, nonprofit or private. The commission is not charged with identifying what other specific governmental jurisdictions or other entities should be responsible for providing specific services.

The Commission's adopted work plan states that all County operations (Current Expense and non-Current Expense-funded), not only services funded by the general fund, are appropriate to review from a governance perspective.

In the Commission's review of the full County budget and services provided, we do not recommend that the County get out of any business. We consider the County to have a role in service provision in the following service areas.

COUNTY-WIDE SERVICES	LOCAL SERVICES
Public Health Juvenile Detention & Courts Juvenile Probation Youth Services Developmental Disabilities Superior Court Adult Detention: Pretrial & Felonies Prosecuting Attorney (County Cases) Public Defense Mental Health Chemical Dependency Services Involuntary Treatment Medical Examiner Public Transportation Sewage Collection & Treatment Budget Auditor Elections Finance/Treasurer Executive Council Assessor	Public Safety (Police Services/Crimes) Traffic Enforcement Planning and Land Use Controls (GMA) Parks and Recreation Building/Fire Code Inspections Community Development Roads Surface Water District Court





The Commission recommends that King County continue to obtain input about its role in the following services:

- ▶ **Economic development**
- ▶ **Regional transportation**
- ▶ **Airport**
- ▶ **Boundary Review Board**
- ▶ **Animal Control**
- ▶ **King County Fair**
- ▶ **Emergency Medical Services**



The County's scope of services is broad and complex. We developed an impression that most residents do not know or understand this breadth or complexity of services, the mandatory nature of many services provided by the County, nor the financial pressure and choices that have led to the current crisis. **King County should undertake a major education effort about its role in providing local and county-wide services, the services and value it provides, and the return on investment that residents receive for their investment.**





PHASE

2

How County Services Should be Provided

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS



PROVIDED

How County Services Should Be Provided

Ordinance 14514 directs the Commission to recommend how County services and service areas should be provided to ensure long-term efficiency and accountability on the part of King County, including recommendations, if any, to change or improve 1) service delivery systems and 2) current employment policies. We reviewed case studies and best practices in other counties of similar size and characteristics to King County. A report of this review is included as Appendix J.

The Commission's findings and recommendations suggest that the County faces significant challenges and should make changes to its operations in five key areas:

- Intergovernmental Relations
- Employment Policy
- Law and Justice
- Human Services
- Management Approaches

Intergovernmental Relations

The State's Growth Management Act (GMA), passed in 1990, brought some structure to how local governments would plan for growth and balance their budgets.

The Act set the course for how our local areas would develop; however, some of the regional issues and agreements suggested by GMA have been left unresolved. King County developed Countywide Planning Policies to implement GMA. A 1994 Fiscal and Economic Development study (Fis/Ed Study) evaluated the impacts of the Policies on individuals, businesses and government. The study suggested that the region had unfinished business: there was no regional finance or regional governance plan in place to support GMA implementation, fund infrastructure, or support the development of urban and emerging centers. Since then, there have been unclear and overlapping service responsibilities, and debate continues about how regional and local services should be provided, funded and governed.

The Growth Management Act encouraged the cities and County to enter into a process to prepare a coordinated plan for the delivery of government services. The County, cities, and special districts participated in a 1996-1998



Regional Finance & Governance effort convened to resolve service roles and who should pay for what. No agreements were reached. The County and cities have made some efforts to resolve this issue since 1988, with little supporting State action. We have heard of chronic disagreement between the County and State about roles and funding for services.

Ten years ago, the elected leaders of our region required themselves to resolve these and other substantive issues in the County's implementation of the Growth Management Act (GMA). Today, many requirements remain unfulfilled, many issues unresolved, and structural governance problems anticipated by our elected leaders at that time have grown worse, as predicted. In our view, the requirements adopted as part of the GMA process continue to provide a good policy framework for addressing virtually every issue and recommendation identified in our report. We urge County officials to lead another effort to translate these policies into programs that will meet the needs of people in King County. The challenge is not just related to annexations and incorporations, but resolving the debate about state, county and city governmental service responsibilities and who will pay for them.

Over the last few years, several agreements between the cities and King County have been developed. These city-County negotiations should be built on:

- ▶ Service contracts for jail, district court, and sheriff services;
- ▶ The transition of urban parks and pools to cities;
- ▶ Relationships developed through the Regional Policy Committee's efforts to determine a range of human services appropriate for county-wide partnership.

The County's contracts for some services benefits the County by supplementing county-wide capacity to deliver services, and benefits the cities through economies of scale. These agreements have resulted in the County being able to move toward full cost recovery in its contracts and form the basis for future successful agreements.

In addition, cities and counties have jointly agreed to seek more tools from the State to help with annexation or incorporation of urban unincorporated areas. Recent proposed state legislation and local government legislative agendas have reflected this. (See Appendix D.)



Intergovernmental Relations Recommendations

The Governance Commission's vision of King County is a government that primarily focuses on providing county-wide services and recognizing its role as a local service provider in unincorporated areas.



In collaboration with cities and the State of Washington, King County should implement the regional finance and governance requirements of the Countywide Planning Policies adopted in 1994, pursuant to the State's Growth Management Act. (See Appendix E.)

This effort should focus on the following objectives:



- **Implement a new system to require annexations or incorporation of unincorporated areas within the urban growth boundary, which should include the participation of the affected community.** We acknowledge and encourage the recent efforts of the County and cities to work with these communities to encourage their annexation or incorporation.



- Establish a new system to **improve local government representation for unincorporated areas** outside the urban growth boundary. This effort should be conducted as a collaboration among King County, the State of Washington, and residents of unincorporated areas outside the urban growth boundary. We recommend King County explore the recommendation of the Municipal League to craft a modern form of township which would serve the needs of unincorporated rural King County. This recommendation is discussed more fully in the section titled "Governance and Political Structure to Provide County Services."



- Establish a **regional government funding plan** that includes an assessment of the structural financial challenges now facing King County and the cities of King County. The plan should clearly identify the amounts and sources of revenue available to King County to meet regional service and infrastructure needs. The plan should also prioritize those services that can be funded with these revenues, and identify other needs that could be met if additional funding was available.



- Create a county-wide system for providing and funding **human services.** See "What King County Can Do."



- Cooperate in the development of a county-wide system to address **transportation needs** as a participant in the Regional Transportation Improvement District, or if necessary by other means.



Should these voluntary efforts fail to fulfill the regional governance and finance requirements of the Countywide Planning Policies by the end of 2005, the Washington State Legislature should reconsider whether the Growth Management Act can be implemented in King County. If, by the end of 2005, the regional dialogue fails to produce the above agreements, the State of Washington should clarify in state law:

- The county services that are to be **regionally provided and funded with regional revenues;**
- Establish a timeline and provide funding for the County to **divest itself of urban local government** service provision, consistent with the annexation or incorporation of urban unincorporated areas;
- **The funding authority and direction for cities to annex** urban unincorporated areas;
- The state's **funding obligation** to cities and counties; and
- The appropriate reallocation of revenue sources consistent with these shifts of responsibilities.

Employment Policy

We started our discussions with the question, "what kind of County government do we want to have?" The Commission considered whether we could find the kind of funding to help King County with its Current Expense fund challenges by examining changes to employment policy. The Commission considered ideas that are worthwhile improvements, but do not have a significant dollar or policy impact; and focused primarily on structural issues that would directly relate to the County's structure and organization to deliver services.



The Commission does not believe that the sole answer to King County's structural and Current Expense funding problems lies in the area of employment policies. A balance appears to have been struck in King County between providing essential and mandatory government services, and providing living-wage public sector jobs. Revisiting that balance is not a productive exercise. To get to structural questions, our elected officials must lead the public in a discussion about: the kind of government King County should be; what services the County should provide; what level of service should be provided; and what citizens are willing to pay for.

In the 2003 Adopted Budget, criminal justice agencies (the jail, sheriff, prosecutor, courts) made up the largest share of employees funded by the Current Expense Fund (Exhibit Two).²

² Adopted 2003 King County Budget.



EXHIBIT TWO

King County Employment – All Funds

(* = mostly funded by Current Expense Fund)

Department	2003 Adopted FTEs	% of Workforce
Transportation	4,457	34.15%
Natural Resources	1,601	12.27%
Public Health	1,475	11.30%
* Sheriff	1,078	8.26%
* Executive Services	1,045	8.01%
* Adult and Juvenile Detention	917	7.03%
* Prosecuting Attorney	504	3.86%
* Superior Court	392	3.00%
* Community & Human Services	334	2.56%
Developmental & Environmental Services	250	1.91%
* District Court	235	1.80%
* County Assessor	229	1.75%
* Judicial Administration	211	1.61%
* Council	157	1.20%
* Office of the Executive	84	0.64%
Internal Support & Grants	79	0.61%
* Executive	2	0.02%
* Boundary Review Board	2	0.02%
Total County	13,051	100.00%



Although the sole answer to the County's budget crisis does not lie with employment policy, changes in employment policy could result in savings that would help with the short-term Current Expense Fund shortfall. Major savings could come only from the reduction or elimination of programs, which would eliminate essential responsibilities of the County.

The Commission did not pursue an in-depth review of salaries and benefits. We reviewed existing information and heard from presenters who are knowledgeable about King County labor-management relations, and who shared the following information with us:

- ▶ An overview of the County's adopted public labor policies;
- ▶ The King County Charter, Code and other legal issues surrounding employment policies;
- ▶ An understanding of the composition and represented status of the County's workforce, including recent trends and costs; and
- ▶ Recent efforts to gain efficiencies and savings through labor-management collaboration.

From these sources, we learned that legal obstacles and constraints exist to change employment policies, including:



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- **Labor Relations Generally.**

- **The Level of Wages and Benefits.**

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Governance Commission believes that King County employees are providing value in the public services they provide.

Benchmarking analyses conducted by others, that we reviewed, show King County's wages and benefits relative to other public organizations; these studies do not address issues in enough depth or detail for us to be able to say that King County has higher or lower wages than others. It is our impression that public employees are not overpaid. County policy limits salary ranges to plus or minus 5% of the market average of other government workers (market defined as West Coast metropolitan counties). The County's salary schedule ensures that employees are, even at the top of the pay scale, still below the market average until they reach step 10.

We acknowledge that direct comparisons between many public sector jobs and private sector jobs are difficult to make. Benefit comparisons may be easier to make. **Thus, there is an increasing trend in the private and public sector for employees to pay a portion of their health insurance premiums, which King County should explore and include in discussions with County workers. A market comparison of county benefits (and pay in appropriate cases) to private sector jobs should be considered.**

Employment Policy Recommendations

We recommend that King County's elected officials (Council, Executive, Prosecutor, Sheriff, Judges and Assessor) investigate labor costs and span of control in more depth, by choosing two or three high value job categories to compare to other large public and private organizations, analyzing direct costs, fully loaded indirect costs, and supervisory costs. The County should further analyze, as the BAT Force recommends, the number of employees needed to carry out certain functions and deliver certain outcomes. The purpose of this cost and span of control study is to provide the County with a timely, definitive assessment of classification and compensation levels between King County and other public and private organizations.

- **Collective Bargaining and Mandatory Interest Arbitration.**

We were impressed by institutional mechanisms in place to address issues appropriate for collective bargaining and to address grievances. There are labor-management committees in nearly every department and committees that address county-wide issues. We found these mechanisms “hard-wired” into the system that suggests changing them would be very difficult. Key management rights have been bargained away over time in ways that would be equally difficult to change.



Mandatory interest arbitration has costs. Requirements of federal funding and State law result in half of all represented employees having mandatory interest arbitration. These agreements result in a marginal number of employees being included who might not otherwise have interest arbitration, but it appears to make sense for these employees to be included. County staff acknowledges that a premium is offered to those unions with binding interest arbitration when contracts are bargained to avoid going to interest arbitration, but we do not know the cumulative effects of these costs. It was reported that these costs do not represent a significant financial impact to the County.

▪ **Competitive Bidding and Contracting.**

We did not reach consensus about contracting of services to the public, private, or non-profit sector. We reviewed information from other jurisdictions showing that competitive bidding practices led to efficiencies in how the work was done and budget savings by contracting work to private companies or other governments. Some believe contracting is needed to understand where King County compares, or could improve, relative to its peers in the non-profit and private sector. Others point to case law and current collective bargaining agreements that prohibit contracting of some services. Finally, some agreed with the BATF's position that if public sector employees cannot supply services as effectively and efficiently as others who deliver the service in the public or private sector, then contracting should be explored. Contracting out county services to cities, also called "reverse-contracting," has been achieved through interlocal agreements in Multnomah County, and **the Commission recommends that the County continue to pursue opportunities with King County's cities to develop interlocal agreements to provide local services where appropriate, and renegotiate union contracts or seek law changes to make reverse-contracting possible.**

Which services the County must engage in, plus the level of service, is a strong determinant of the number of staff. After considering transit operators and road service employees, the largest groups of employees are in Current Expense-funded criminal justice agencies: deputy sheriffs, deputy prosecutors, and corrections officers. The number of staff in these departments is caseload-driven, and we believe staffing levels can be affected by reducing recidivism in the law and justice system. **Solving the budget problem requires addressing the policy choices made about level of service in criminal justice departments, and those policy choices cannot be considered without deep analysis into processes, labor costs, indirect costs and management costs within each department.**





Having multiple separately elected officials with control over staffing and levels of service has not led to a smaller or more efficient workforce. **When annexations and incorporations occur, the County should reduce staffing in keeping with changed service demands. The County should remain focused on providing quality county-wide services and its local service role in rural areas.**



- **The Relationship Between Workforce and Criminal Justice Policy.** Criminal justice costs are projected to overtake all other Current Expense Fund costs by 2010. By accepting this projection, the region allows existing policy choices to stand. The County cannot allow criminal justice costs to overtake all other general purpose revenues. **In addition to identifying the mandatory nature of criminal justice services, King County must also analyze and identify the appropriate and affordable level of service to provide criminal justice services, including the drivers of employment and how this affects the inputs to the system: what policy choices we make about arrests, jail bookings, case filings, and how these choices contribute to increasing costs.** County leaders must point toward changes in level of service, set priorities about service and engage all the criminal justice agencies to lessen pressures on the inputs to our jail while continuing to protect our citizens from crime.

Law and Justice

- The County's contribution of funding for some Current Expense programs allows access to considerable outside funding. This funding "leverage" is seen in multiple public health and human services programs.
- King County is the 12th most populous county, yet does not rank in the top 25 nationwide in incarceration rates.
- We heard testimony that one influence on the increase in jail populations is the war on drugs, which is reported to have failed to reduce criminal behavior or recidivism. The County's May, 2002 Adult Justice Operational Master Plan (AJOMP) suggests that drug cases are the single biggest workload factor in King County's felony justice system, making up 37% of Superior Court filings in 2001.³ These cases are a contributor to increased admissions to the jail. State law changes related to DUI and domestic violence cases have contributed to increasing misdemeanor jail admissions. (See Appendix F.)
- Prior to the current crisis, local law and justice systems were affected by the change in the involuntary commitment law; and "de-institutionalization" of the mentally ill. As state mental hospitals were closed, many people



³ King County Adult Justice Operating Master Plan, Capacity Options, May 2002, p. 1.

*The Adult Justice
Operational Master Plan
(AJOMP) encouraged the use
of alternatives to incarceration,
encouraged treatment and
coordination of criminal justice
and human services.*

were set adrift in their communities. Some became homeless; others ended up in jail.

- King County's Drug Court is a national model and shows promising outcomes for those involved.
- Prior Charter Review Commission reports suggested that continuity of service and continuity of funding of specialized police services cannot financially or practically be maintained on a jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction basis.
- The Budget Advisory Task Force recommended finding savings from administrative consolidation of District and Superior Court and seeking state support for district and superior courts, indigent defense, and aggravated murder cases.
- The Adult Justice Operational Master Plan encouraged the use of alternatives to incarceration, and encouraged treatment and coordination of criminal justice and human services. The second phase of this study will focus on the case management processes for those accused of a felony who make up 60% of the secure jail population. The Plan has prompted the use of community corrections programs and oversight of these programs by the judicial branch.
- King County's cities are using other counties' jail facilities to house their misdemeanor prisoners.
- Other counties have moved toward court consolidation, continually seeking options to streamline operations and make the system more accessible to the public.
- The federal Office of Justice Programs reports that the State of Washington ranks 50th of 50 states in the state investment in county and city prosecution, indigent defense and courts. These services are state-mandated, yet the State of Washington contributes little toward prosecution and indigent defense, and King County has sought relief for extraordinary costs in recent years.
- Pierce County is making multiple changes to its law and justice system, including:
 - A long-term commitment to community court;
 - Developing a "clearinghouse" model with a spectrum of community-based best practice models available for different populations (such as adult self-sufficiency, veterans, housing, transitional case management, and substance abuse treatment)
 - Making treatment a condition of sentencing;



- ▶ Using a budget proviso, budget cuts to find alternatives;
- ▶ Engaging prosecutor, sheriff and judges together to change the system;
- ▶ Addressing collective bargaining/workforce issues about who does what functions and reducing overtime; and
- ▶ Regional cost sharing for some specialized police services.

Law and Justice Recommendations

King County's law and justice system must balance the preservation of public safety and cost savings, reflecting both sound fiscal and justice policy. The Commission believes that when people commit crimes they should be fairly adjudicated and pay their debt to society. However, the County and region must consider the sources of criminality and how best to address the behavior of those who are part of the criminal justice system. As noted in previous sections, King County's criminal justice costs are projected to overtake all other Current Expense costs by 2010, and this projection will not change without a fundamental shift in system investment to appropriately use jail resources, shift public resources toward preventive services away from incarceration, and ensure that mental health and substance abuse treatment services have sufficient funding.

Together with other counties, King County should pursue a legislative agenda to seek cost-sharing with the State of Washington for the costs of the law and justice system, and increase the State's contribution to mandatory law and justice costs.

To control law and justice costs, King County must aggressively and proactively constrain “inputs” to the criminal justice system through policy, process and funding changes, including the following recommendations.

- **Police Agencies**

- ▶ **Establish appropriate criteria, developed jointly by the County and cities, to permit booking of nonviolent offenders without incarceration. We recognize that some crimes require incarceration, and that the County faces liability issues in developing such programs. King County should develop additional capacity for community-based housing and treatment options where police or adult detention agencies can direct low-level non-violent offenders after they have been booked and identified.**
- ▶ **Forge interlocal agreements to consolidate and reduce duplication of regional police services.**
- ▶ **Establish interlocal agreements relating to the transportation of prisoners.**



- **Adult Detention**
 - ▶ **Establish benchmarks for budget and staff reductions linked to the jail's average daily population levels. As average daily population decreases, permanently close units of Seattle or Kent jail facilities.**
 - ▶ **Conduct outcome evaluations of all offender service programs for performance and cost, and devote resources to those programs both cost-beneficial and with positive effects on recidivism.**



- **System-wide**
 - **Emphasize using, and increasing the availability of, alternative sanctions and programs for non-violent offenders throughout King County. We are aware that the County has developed pilot programs offering alternatives to incarceration, and believe these programs should be expanded.**



- Invest in mental health, drug and alcohol treatment services and case management.** The funding for these services comes primarily from the State of Washington, so the County should seek increases in state funding or devote County resources to supplement existing funding.



- **Seek greater cost sharing for court operations, indigent defense, and complex cases with the State.** This recommendation is in keeping with recently-cited findings by the Budget Advisory Task Force (BATF) and Municipal League showing Washington is 50th out of 50 states in the level of state support for the criminal justice system.



- **Superior and District Court**
 - **Increase the frequency of first appearance calendars, move those booked who can safely be released pre-trial out of the jail at the earliest possible time, and increase information to judges at that time.**



- ▶ **Explore aggressive court calendar management to minimize jail days.**

As we look at our system of courts, budgetary savings should not be allowed to dominate over the purpose of the courts, which is to deliver justice to our citizens. However, we have identified several areas in which the Commission concludes that some current inefficiencies impact both users of the court and the County.



- **Consolidate Superior Court and District Court Administrative Functions.**

Further, consolidation of the clerk's office function, while preserving the clerk's offices at each court location, will facilitate citizen access to the office for filing and for searching electronic information. Some of the technology platforms will be in place to make this consolidation possible within a year.



The Superior Court's current divisions focus on civil cases, criminal cases, juvenile court, family court and other special assignments. It would be logical to expect that a consolidated Superior-District court would also contain a panel for misdemeanor trials and might provide that trials of misdemeanors would be held in locations around King County as the District Court trials currently are.

Consolidation raises different issues in other counties and we express no opinion on whether it is an appropriate statewide solution.





- ▶ **Encourage inter-local agreements between Municipal and District/Superior Courts.**

One of the inefficiencies in today's mix of Superior, District and Municipal Courts lies in the enforcement of warrants. It is not uncommon for individuals to have multiple warrants outstanding in several municipalities for failure to appear for court on traffic or drug possession charges, or, perhaps, more serious misdemeanors. For example, if such an individual is stopped for a traffic violation in Shoreline, and has warrants in Shoreline, Bellevue and Enumclaw, the individual will not be released until an appearance before each court, requiring jail for several days and transport from court to court until all appearances are met. This imposes significant costs upon the County and municipalities, as well as disrupting the individual's life for several days. For significant crimes involving public safety issues, the cost may be well-justified. But most misdemeanors do not justify that cost. In fact, in many cases, the warrant will be discharged upon appearance and the posting of bond.



➤ **The Commission recommends that courts of limited jurisdiction enter into inter-local agreements authorizing one court to release, upon appropriate security, warrants for non-violent offenses issued by other courts in King County.**

The Commission is aware of suggestions that all municipal courts be consolidated into a single system, which would sit at locations throughout the county. Others believe local courts are desirable. Such consolidation does not impact the County's general fund, the core of our charge, and the Commission has not investigated this issue.



► After the foregoing steps are completed, the Commission recommends that the County and cities consider further the role of Municipal Courts and whether they should be consolidated into either a single court of limited jurisdiction or into the Superior Court system.

The Commission is also aware of proposals for more cities to create their own independent municipal courts, which would reduce the service responsibilities of King County District Court in incorporated areas. The resolution of this issue should be a subject of negotiation among the County and cities.

The Commission also considered whether to recommend full consolidation of local municipal courts into the Superior Court system. We recognize that some advocate the benefits of local courts for misdemeanor and small claims. Others assert that the advantages of having local courts can be integrated into a larger integrated system. These issues are worthy of careful consideration, but should properly



be considered after the first three recommendations in this section have been accomplished and the system as it then stands can be reviewed.

Human Services

- **Background**

There are a host of organizations that provide and fund human services in King County, including the federal government, Washington State, King County, City of Seattle, Suburban Cities, United Way, private foundations, faith communities, service providers, businesses, volunteers, and other organizations. Federal and state governments are the largest funding contributors.

King County's governmental role is to partner with others to plan, fund, and evaluate human service systems for King County residents and assure county-wide provision of service systems mandated by state and/or federal governments (mental health, chemical dependency, developmental disabilities, and veterans). King County is also the local government human service provider for unincorporated areas, and forms partnerships with multiple funders to support county-wide and local human service programs. For every dollar that King County devotes to human services, the Department of Community and Human services leverages an additional \$7.55 from external sources (mostly federal and state grants for specific services).

The County's Regional Policy Committee has also focused on the funding and provision of human services, and in 2003 recommended regional human services that should be available throughout the County regardless of residency, and worked to identify transitional issues that must be addressed before long term planning can occur (also known as Task 2). The next step is to create long-term stability in funding and services. (See Appendix G.)

The Task 2 Staff Report and Recommendations to the Regional Policy Committee defines human services as those services and strategies that: support vulnerable or at risk individuals and families in times of need; redress the social conditions that make people vulnerable or put them at risk; and foster an effective and efficient system of services. The report identifies a continuum of human services, from prevention of crises, including crime, to assuring basic survival to assistance in becoming self-reliant.

In the Task 2 Report, the regional services recommended for county-wide partnership received 2002 funding of \$124 million, with half coming from state and federal funding allocated by local governments, and half (\$60 million) coming from local government funding. Of the \$60 million contributed by local governments, King County contributes \$18.7 million, Seattle contributes \$38.6 million, and all other cities contribute \$2.99 million.

For every dollar that King County devotes to human services, the Department of Community and Human services leverages an additional \$7.55 from external sources (mostly federal and state grants for specific services).



The Executive has appointed a Regional Task Force on Human Services to define a “basic service level” for regional human services; examine the current distribution of regional human services; and identify financing options and a future system partnership, including roles for King County and the cities within King County.

- **What King County Can Do**

The Commission supports the current County policy of decreasing pressures on the criminal justice system by investing in prevention and intervention services. The County should continue to acknowledge the relationship between those aspects of human services and criminal justice systems and make complementary investments in both systems.

A strong county-wide system to provide human services is an essential service to King County citizens even though it is not mandated by the state. Prior regional financing plans envisioned a funding system with contributions from the County and cities for regional human services.

King County should be responsible for administering governmentally-provided county-wide human services and should acknowledge this role in its partnerships with the cities. Agreements must be reached among the cities and County about the level of service to be provided in human services, what will be funded, and how it must be funded.

The overarching vision of this system is one of excellence: King County should execute its service and partnership role in this system so well that the cities are required to fund less of the human service responsibilities they are taking on now by supporting non-profit services in each City, and may be more inclined to contribute to joint funding for human services or cooperate on annexation and other agreements.

In 2004, the work and deliberations of the King County and cities on the Regional Policy Committee, and the Regional Task Force on Human Services offer promise to resolve these issues.

As noted in the recommendations about Intergovernmental Relations, if these county-wide dialogues do not produce an agreement about the funding and service roles of governments by the end of 2005, **the State of Washington should clarify in state law those human services activities that must be funded regionally and provide counties the funding authorization to pay for them.**

- **“Forward Thrust” for Human Development**

The Commission consistently heard and agreed that the County's focus on targeted, preventive human services was a key factor in decreasing pressure on the criminal justice system, and the criminal justice

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King County has many non-profit private foundations focusing on human services. Many churches and individual donors emphasize their giving

This has advantages as well. Private sector mechanisms for collecting and obligating contributions can maximize flexibility and can fully engage a wide-range of community-based organizations. Since no one has discovered the solution to all social problems, and since individuals respond to different forms of assistance, the greatest diversity in delivery organizations will allow ingenuity and private sector creativity to work to the maximum. And donors can be assured that their contributions will reach the groups providing assistance, rather than being absorbed by a governmental bureaucracy.

In the late 1960s, civic leaders of Seattle and King County banded together to launch Forward Thrust, a comprehensive set of programs to address the physical infrastructure needs of our community. Today, an even greater challenge lies before our community and an equally bold display of leadership by civic, community and political leadership is required if the people of King County and its cities hope to address the human capital needs the 21st century presents.

By all indicators, the problems of “human needs” in King County have grown significantly over the last decade. The United Way of King County’s (UWKC) 2001 Community Assessment, Communities Count 2002 Report, and State of Washington data provide some perspective. (See Appendix H.)

- ▶ Almost 2,800 King County children were in some form of foster care based on a one-month count in March of 2001;
- ▶ Suicide was the second leading cause of death in King County among 15 to 24 year olds.
- ▶ The State's Department of Employment Security reports 7,430 young people under the age of 25 made unemployment claims in 2003, or 6% of King County claims.
- ▶ The 2002 One-Night Count of People Who Are Homeless reports that of the approximately 2,000 persons living unsheltered, 39 were minors; and 1,088 youth were in shelters or transitional housing with their families.
- ▶ The high school completion rate for King County's 19 school districts ranges from 63% to 96%.
- ▶ 46% of 10th graders and 32% of 8th graders say that drugs are easily available.
- ▶ High school-age youth in four King County districts reported having



only 20 or fewer of 40 developmental assets. The more assets our youth have, the more likely they are to engage in positive behaviors and the less likely they are to participate in risky behaviors, such as using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

We may debate the causes for these conditions. Are they related to a decline in the effectiveness of our educational system to educate people to meet life's challenges; or a court-directed shift in the treatment of the mentally ill to exclude involuntary commitment and, therefore, rely increasingly on community-based treatment; or simply a lack of commitment and political will by the community and its political leaders? The effects are not debatable: inadequate resources have led to inadequate results with more "downstream" costs in the criminal justice system, private injury and losses due to crime, and a society which fails to realize our ideals of creating an opportunity for every person to realize his or her human potential.

No society may call itself humane and civil if it fails to address the human conditions that allow people to slide into patterns of anti-social, even criminal behavior. No society can live up to American ideals that allow the increase of failed lives.

While human misery and suffering at all ages calls for our compassion, the most critical place for intervention is before, or just after, antisocial behavior begins. Looked at simply as a budget item, prevention dollars, when spent truly effectively, save far greater policing and incarceration costs later. Looked at as a moral mandate upon us all, the urgency is much greater.

- **The importance of the non-governmental approach.**

Much good work is being done by small organizations serving only a few individuals at a time, but able, therefore, to give focused and personal attention to the people with whom they work. For example, a program operated by Northshore Youth and Family Services called the Juvenile Intervention Program works with about 250 youth each year who are first time non-violent offenders. Instead of bringing detained youth to juvenile detention, police bring the youth home and make an agreement in lieu of detention for the youth to complete three months' treatment with the agency. This allows for work with the youth and parents, achieving a striking 6% recidivism rate to the County's 27%, and a cost of \$900 per youth versus \$21,000 per youth detained by the County.

Teen Hope is another successful example, serving as a temporary shelter for at-risk teenagers. Supported by churches and government grants, it provides an immediate source of assistance to teenagers who, for whatever reason, need short-term stability.



Faith-based organizations should be considered as possible delivery agents for human services when qualified and willing to meet secular requirements.

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■ **The role of faith-based organizations should be considered.**

Anecdotal information suggests that faith-based organizations might produce better results (such as lower recidivism) in some cases at lower cost. Why the reported results are better may not be fully understood. Partly perhaps because of the pre-existing opinions of the client that he or she may be better served by people with similar views, which may help people break their own perceived pattern of helplessness; partly there may be a different quality of motivation by workers in faith-based operations acting out of their own religious convictions or love and service; partly a more holistic approach may be the key. Or maybe it is simply that if enough different approaches are used, some of them will be effective.

Whatever the reason, faith-based organizations should be considered as possible delivery agents for targeted human services when and where they are qualified and willing to meet the secular requirements for non-discrimination toward clients (race, ethnicity, gender, religious); and when and where they are willing to allow clients to be free to practice their own religious beliefs, or decline participation in religious discourse without coercion. We should not fail to serve citizens who desire and who would benefit from faith-based solutions.

At the same time, it is clear that respect for the humanity of our citizens requires that King County assure that faith-based services be integrated into a broader range of services that allows individuals to seek secular services should they choose.

Management Approaches

The focus of these recommendations is the County's organization of administrative and internal service operations: finance and budget functions, performance measurement, technology, and overhead.

Our review included an understanding of the County's organizational structure; past challenges with technology projects; recent and continuing efforts to measure department performance; and revisions to the overhead plan. The Commission acknowledges that the County is a large, complex organization with multiple service demands and we believe that more can be done to align the County's systems internally to improve services to the public.

Recommendations for Management Approaches

The Commission agrees with 2003 Budget Advisory Task Force (BATF) recommendations that the County should become more efficient and "eliminate duplication in real and symbolic ways that instill public trust by:

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King County faces two practical concerns to implementation of biennial budgeting. First, the data systems necessary to support the development and preparation of a budget are not currently capable of supporting biennial budgeting. Until the County replaces its financial systems, biennial budgeting would be difficult to implement. Second, the conversion to biennial budgeting would be a major effort to bring together the complex systems to build and transfer a budget into the accounting system once the budget is adopted. The County would need to plan and phase the implementation of biennial budgeting. Despite these challenges, the



Commission encourages King County to pursue the implementation of biennial budgeting.

The current overhead plan structure suggests that even when departments are effectively managing their own operations, the overhead burden for many agencies is acute. In an era of shrinking Current Expense funds, **the County must simplify, make transparent and rationalize overhead charges** through initiatives such as performance measurement and service-level agreements that are negotiated between managers of the Current Expense fund and other agencies.

The County must aggressively seek effective, up-to-date, unified information technology systems to support its activities, especially for central functions. The County should expedite its technology strategic planning process and funding for system unification projects and make the early scoping for these projects with technology experts a high priority. Other efforts to make programs efficient are hampered by the County's lack of unified technology systems.

The County must do all it can to control its costs by developing robust, outcome-based benchmarks and comparative data about its own operations, and use that information to compare itself to other entities doing similar activities and find efficiencies (including public, private and non-profit sector examples). All County agencies, including separately elected officials, are encouraged to make this cost and performance measurement effort an active part of management across the entire government. As mentioned in the employment policy recommendations, these measures must measure the total cost to provide services. The Commission considered the Executive's Performance Measurement Initiative in 2003, and the Baltimore CitiStat program that has been implemented in Maryland, and concluded that efforts to measure and track performance will help King County set service priorities. **The Commission supports a regular, independent, external review and performance evaluation of King County functions and operations.**

The County Code (KCC 4.04.200) requires that all capital projects be supported by an operational master plan (OMP) guiding how the agency will operate now and in the future, analyzing alternatives to accomplish defined goals and objectives, performance measures, projected workload, needed resources, implementation schedules and general cost estimates, and how the organization would respond in the future to changed conditions. **The Commission recommends that all agencies, regardless of CIP status, develop and maintain Operational Master Plans linked to their operations, performance and budgets to guide operations.**

